

GHI MATTERS

Vol. 07 - July 2026

Welcome to our GHI newsletter

July arrived with real energy across GHI, as new partnerships, expanding activities, and a growing community push our work forward. With more than 2,000 professionals now connected through our network, this is a moment where collaboration is accelerating and science-based food safety is gaining fresh ground worldwide.

This month captured what collective effort can achieve. Registration for the GHI World Congress officially opened, with early bird rates now live and abstract submissions welcome from across the food safety, food science, and food systems community. Our keynote lineup continues to grow, with Prof. Clive Phillips confirmed as our third speaker alongside Dr. Betül Vazgeçer and Dr. Richard Khaw Min Cheh. Ambassadors are deepening regional ties, from Prof. Agnieszka Orkus's teaching visit to the University of Sarajevo to Prof. Adewale Obadina's continental work harmonising quality assurance across African higher education. Our scientific community is also expanding its footprint: GHI represented the network at EFSA's Emerging Risks Exchange meeting in Granada, Prof. Iuliana Vintilă joined the Editorial Board of *Advances in Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, and we've opened a new Call for Contributions to a Special Issue on sustainable food systems and global health in *Sustainability*. Each of these efforts, local or international, feeds into the same broader goal: building food systems that are safer, more resilient, and grounded in shared science.

As our community grows, so does our capacity to connect people, exchange knowledge, and turn ideas into practical impact. At GHI, progress is powered by people showing up for each other. We invite our members, partners, and collaborators to stay engaged, explore new pathways for cooperation, and keep building a global movement dedicated to advancing food safety through science.

GHI President's message

Dear Members of the Global Harmonization Initiative community,

Some months feel like steady progress. Others feel like acceleration. This month has felt like the latter.

Watching registration open for the GHI World Congress, and abstracts begin arriving from researchers across the world, is a reminder of why we built this gathering in the first place: not as a single event, but as a moment where years of scattered, parallel work — in different countries, different labs, different regulatory systems — finally sits in the same room together. Welcoming Prof. Clive Phillips as our third keynote speaker only sharpens that purpose. His refusal to treat animal welfare, environmental impact, and human nutrition as competing priorities is precisely the kind of thinking GHI exists to encourage.

This month brought a reminder of how quickly a single food safety finding can escalate into something much larger. A *Cyclospora* outbreak linked to iceberg lettuce (sourced from Mexico and distributed across the United States), a major recall, a retracted lab result, and now a congressional inquiry into how the whole investigation was handled — a stark illustration of how fragile public trust in food safety oversight can be once the science itself becomes contested.

While that story continues to unfold, another is quietly taking shape on the global stage: preparations are well underway for COP31, which Türkiye will host in Antalya this November. For the

first time in years, agri-food systems are shaping up to be a genuine priority on the COP agenda, not an afterthought — the COP31 Presidency has named food security and sustainable agriculture among its core priorities, and FAO has been vocal about agriculture's dual role as both a major source of emissions and one of the clearest paths to real climate progress.

There is something fitting about that conversation happening in the very country where our own community will gather next July (5-9 July 2027) for the GHI World Congress. Food safety and climate action have too often been treated as separate conversations, run by separate institutions, on separate timelines. COP31 is a chance to see whether that is finally starting to change — and GHI's own mission, of building the shared, science-based standards that let food systems adapt safely under pressure, sits squarely at the intersection of both.

Warm regards,

Dr. Diana Bogueva

President, Global Harmonization Initiative



The GHI World Congress Is Calling — Are You Ready?

The wait is over. Registration for the GHI World Congress is officially open, and the global food safety, food science, and food systems community is converging on Konya, Türkiye for five landmark days: 5-9 July 2027. This isn't just another conference — it's where the science, the policy, and the people shaping the future of food systems all meet in one room.

Early bird rates are live now — and they won't last, so if you've been waiting for the right moment, this is it. GHI members, participants from disadvantaged countries, and students all qualify for significantly reduced fees, including half-price registration for students, because great research shouldn't be priced out of the room.

Got research to share? Abstract submissions are open too. Food safety, microbiology, regulatory science, consumer behaviour, animal welfare, sustainability — if it belongs in the global conversation on harmonised food systems, we want to hear it, and we want you on that stage: <https://www.ghiworldcongress.org/abstract-submission/>

And when the sessions end, the experience doesn't have to. We're offering an optional two-day extension to Cappadocia immediately after the Congress – because the best ideas often keep developing over one more conversation, one more dinner, one more day with the people you just met.

☀ Meet Our Third Keynote: Prof. Clive Phillips

Momentum for the GHI World Congress keeps building. We are thrilled to introduce our third confirmed keynote speaker, joining Dr. Betül Vazgeçer (Vice-Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission) and Dr. Richard Khaw Min Cheh, one of ASEAN's leading voices in food safety governance.

Prof. Clive Phillips will tackle one of the most contested questions in food systems today: the future of livestock in global food systems – balancing ethics, environment, and nutrition. Few speakers could bring the perspective he does. As Australia's first Professor of Animal Welfare (University of Queensland), with earlier posts at Cambridge and the University of Wales, and now at Curtin University, Clive has spent his career exactly where animal ethics, nutrition science, and livestock policy collide – precisely the territory where these debates usually stall.

With more than 430 scientific publications and books spanning Principles of Cattle Production to The Welfare of Animals – The Silent Majority, his work refuses to sit in one lane. He edits Animals and Animal Behaviour and Welfare Cases, curates the Animal Welfare and Ethics book series for Springer and CABI, and hosts Conversations with Clive, exploring the realities of livestock production in the developing world. He won the 2012 Eureka Prize for Scientific Research Contributing to the Protection of Animals, and in 2025 was named Australia's top veterinary medicine scientist by The Australian.

What makes Clive's keynote so timely: he refuses to treat animal welfare, environmental impact, and human nutrition as competing priorities to trade off against each other – which is exactly the kind of scientifically grounded, harmonised thinking GHI exists to champion.



With three outstanding keynotes now confirmed, the programme keeps getting stronger – and there's more still to come. Stay tuned. Full speaker bios: <https://www.ghiworldcongress.org/keynote-speakers/>



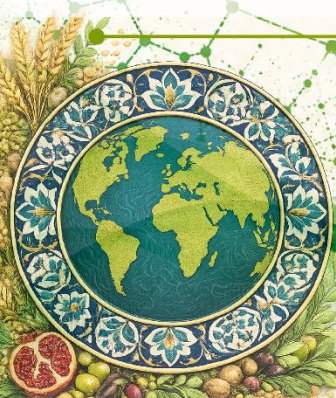
GLOBAL
HARMONIZATION
INITIATIVE



3RD GHI WORLD CONGRESS

HARMONIZED GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEMS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

5 - 9 July 2027
SELÇUK UNIVERSITY
KONYA, TÜRKİYE



Join us in Türkiye 5-9 July 2027 – bring your science, your curiosity, and your passion for making a difference. The GHI World Congress is waiting for you!

GHI Ambassador Activities: Erasmus+ Teaching Visit to the University of Sarajevo

Are edible insects the future of sustainable protein — and are consumers ready for them? That was the central question Prof. Agnieszka Orkus, GHI Ambassador for Poland, brought to students at the University of Sarajevo in mid-July 2026, during an Erasmus+ teaching mobility visit to the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Prof. Orkus delivered a series of lectures titled "Edible Insects in Sustainable Food Systems: Opportunities, Challenges, and Consumer Perspectives." The lectures explored the role of edible insects as an alternative food source, examining their nutritional value and potential environmental benefits alongside the practical opportunities and challenges of incorporating them into everyday food products. Particular attention was given to consumer perceptions and acceptance of insect-based foods, and to the role that clear, evidence-based communication and education can play in supporting informed consumer choice.

The lectures generated considerable discussion among students and faculty, many of whom were engaging with the topic of insect-based foods for the first time. Questions ranged from the regulatory pathways governing novel foods in the region to the practicalities of processing and product development, reflecting a strong appetite among Bosnian students for research at the intersection of food innovation and sustainability. Prof. Orkus's teaching style, grounded in her own research on insect-based food formulation, gave students direct insight into how laboratory-stage innovation can translate into real consumer-facing products.



As GHI Ambassador for Poland and a member of the Scientific Committee of the GHI World Congress, Prof. Orkus also took the opportunity to introduce students and academic staff to the mission and activities of the Global Harmonization Initiative. She shared details of the forthcoming GHI World Congress, to be held in Türkiye in 2027, with particular emphasis on the planned student session and the opportunities it offers young researchers to connect with, and contribute to, the international GHI community.

Exchanges of this kind are central to how GHI builds its global network from the ground up: through direct engagement with the next generation of food scientists in institutions across the world, not only in established research hubs. For students at the University of Sarajevo, the visit offered a rare direct line to an international research community many had previously encountered only through publications.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity for academic exchange, international cooperation, and continued discussion on the future role of sustainable and innovative food sources in global food systems.

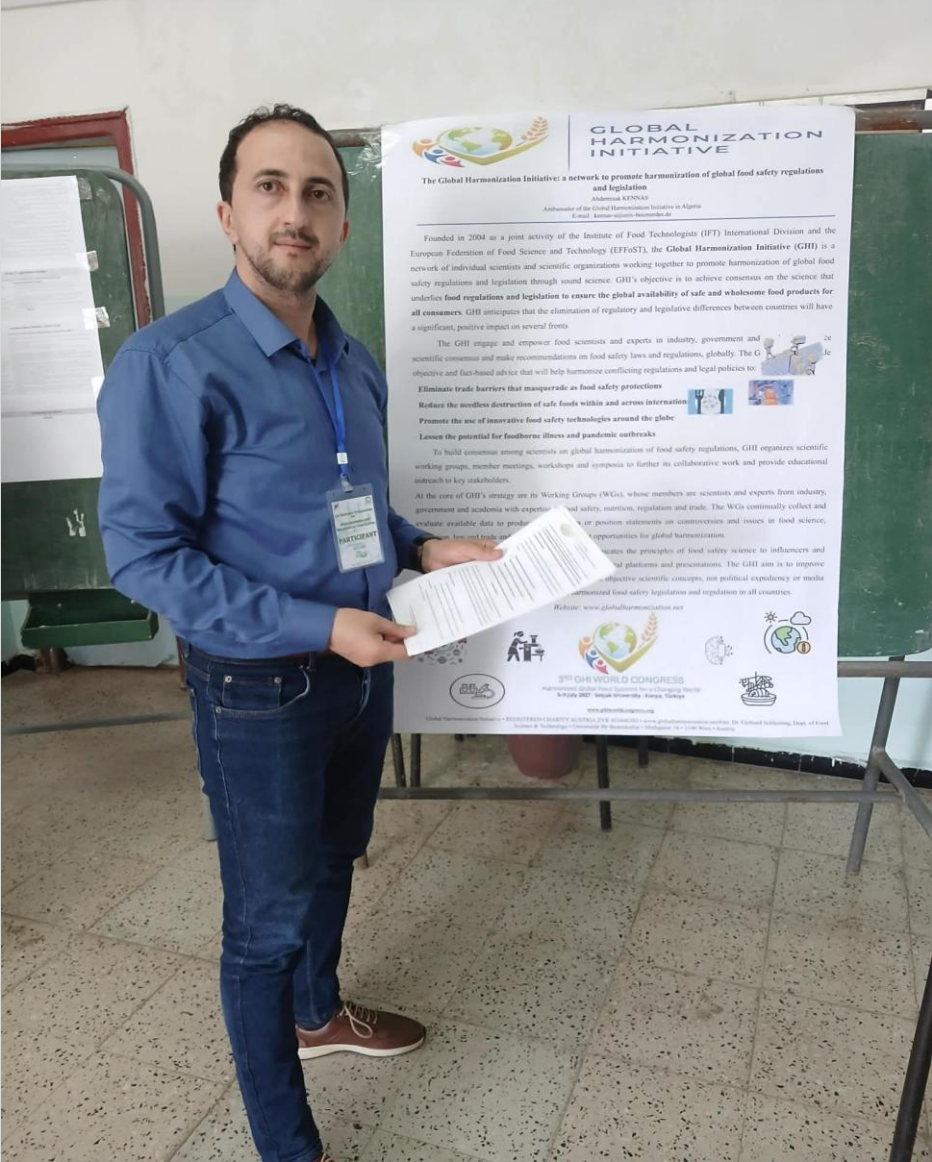


Associate Prof. Agnieszka Orkus (5th from left to right)

GHI Ambassador Spotlight: A Story of Leadership and Momentum from Algeria

There are moments in our network when an ambassador's dedication becomes more than an individual effort. It becomes a spark. Over the past weeks, Dr. Abderrezak Kennas, GHI Ambassador for Algeria, has created exactly that kind of momentum. At the 1st Symposium on Biotechnologies and Bioresources Valorization, in Algeria, he stepped onto the national stage to introduce GHI's goals and constitution to an audience of scientists, researchers, and young innovators. His presentation did more than inform. It carried a sense of purpose. It opened a door. He spoke about GHI as a global movement that thrives when local communities feel connected to it, and his message resonated with attendees who were eager to learn more about international harmonization efforts. Many attendees were hearing about GHI for the first time, and Dr. Kennas made sure they understood not only what GHI stands for, but why it matters for Algeria, for the region, and for the global scientific community.

What makes Dr. Kennas' contribution especially meaningful is the way he extended the conversation beyond the seminar hall. Understanding that awareness grows through visibility, he designed a poster and distributed flyers about the upcoming GHI World Congress 5-9 July 2027 in Konya, Türkiye. He shared them with researchers one by one, creating personal moments of engagement that often matter more than large announcements. He also made the flyer available for all ambassadors, encouraging others to use it in their own outreach. This simple act of generosity reflects the collaborative spirit at the heart of GHI, when one ambassador creates a resource, the entire network benefits.



We cordially invite you to take part in the future Congress of the Global Harmonization Initiative

3RD GHI WORLD CONGRESS
Harmonized Global Food Systems for a Changing World
5-9 July 2027 - Selçuk University - Konya, Türkiye

Topics

- Harmonized global food systems and regulatory alignment
- Climate change, resilience, and emerging global risks
- Trade, geopolitics, and global supply chains
- Digitalization, AI, and data governance
- Novel foods, biotechnology, and emerging production systems
- Food processing, packaging, and technological innovation
- Ethics, equity, and governance of global food systems
- Laboratory methods, validation, and harmonized monitoring
- Future-focused and cross-cutting themes

*Authors of approved abstracts will be invited to submit a full-length paper, **free of charge**, to the congress-hosted Selçuk Journal of Agriculture and Food Sciences*

Abstract submission deadline: 31 December 2026

Notification on acceptance/rejection latest by 30 January 2027

The presenting authors must be registered and payment done by 30 April 2027 to be included in the BOOK of ABSTRACTS (ISBN)

If you have any questions, please get in touch at 2027@ghiworldcongress.org

www.ghiworldcongress.org

Prepared by Dr. KENNAS Abderrezak, GHI Ambassador in Algeria
E-mail: harmas-a@univ-boumerdes.dz

Dr. Kennas' enthusiasm is not only outward-facing. It is deeply personal. He has already submitted his abstract for the Congress, demonstrating his commitment to contributing scientifically and representing Algeria on the global stage. He hopes to see a strong Algerian presence in Konya, and his efforts are already laying the groundwork for that. His story shows how ambassadors can become catalysts - connecting national communities to global conversations, inspiring colleagues, and strengthening GHI's presence through authentic, human engagement.

There is something quietly powerful about the way he works. It is not grand gestures or large campaigns, but steady, intentional actions: a presentation, a conversation, a flyer handed to a curious researcher. These are the kinds of efforts that build awareness, trust, and excitement. They remind us that ambassadors are not only representatives; they are storytellers, bridge-builders, and advocates for a more harmonized scientific world.

Dr. Kennas' example is an invitation to all GHI ambassadors. It shows that outreach does not need to be complicated to be impactful. A local seminar, a shared flyer, a conversation with a colleague - each action helps strengthen our global community. If you feel inspired by his work, you might explore hosting a local seminar, sharing Congress materials with your networks, or preparing your own abstract submission. His story reminds us that leadership often begins with a single step, taken with sincerity and purpose.

If you feel inspired by Dr. Kennas' example, you might explore ways to deepen your own action. His story shows that every action counts, and together, they build a global movement.

Consumer Trust in Next-Generation Probiotics

As probiotic technologies continue to evolve beyond traditional live cultures to include postbiotics, precision fermentation, and engineered microbial strains, understanding consumer trust has become one of the most important challenges facing the future of functional foods. While scientific innovation is advancing rapidly, public acceptance depends not only on demonstrated safety but also on effective communication, transparent regulation, and confidence in emerging technologies.

A new paper published in *Microorganisms* explores how perceptions of safety shape consumer trust in next-generation probiotics. The study examines the factors influencing public acceptance of these innovative products, including media framing, misinformation, regulatory inconsistencies, and health claim substantiation. It also introduces the concepts of the "Animation Gap" and "Contamination Anxiety" to explain why consumers may remain hesitant despite strong scientific evidence supporting these technologies. The authors conclude that building consumer confidence requires evidence-based communication, ethical marketing, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and greater public engagement..

These insights carry practical weight well beyond the research community. For food manufacturers and biotechnology developers, the findings underscore that scientific validation alone will not guarantee market success; how a product is communicated, labelled, and positioned in public discourse may matter just as much as the underlying microbiological data. For regulators, the paper points to the risks of fragmented or inconsistent oversight across jurisdictions, which can itself become a source of consumer doubt rather than reassurance. And for researchers working across food safety, microbiology, and consumer behaviour, the "Animation Gap" and "Contamination Anxiety" offer new conceptual tools for designing studies that go beyond simple safety metrics to capture the psychological and cultural dimensions of technology acceptance.

The publication, "Technological Innovation and Consumer Trust: Understanding Safety Perceptions in Next-Generation Probiotic Development," was authored by Dr. Diana Bogueva, President of the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) and Research Fellow at the Curtin University Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute, Australia, together with Prof. Svetla Danova, GHI Ambassador in Bulgaria and researcher at the Stephan Angelov Institute of Microbiology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria, Prof. Mürkerrem Betül Yerer, GHI Ambassador in Türkiye and Professor at Erciyes University, Türkiye; and Dr Emily Choi Siu Mei from the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi).

This publication highlights the important contributions of GHI leadership to advancing interdisciplinary research at the intersection of food microbiology, food safety, consumer behaviour, and innovation, supporting the responsible development and adoption of next-generation probiotic technologies. Work of this kind reflects GHI's broader mission: bringing together scientists from different disciplines and different parts of the world to ensure that innovation in food and health technologies is matched by the public trust needed to realise its benefits. More here: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2607/14/7/1479>



GHI Leadership Spotlight: Harmonisation in Action Across Africa's Higher Education and Food Safety Landscapes

Harmonisation is often discussed in the abstract — shared standards, mutual recognition, aligned frameworks. Prof. Adewale Olusegun Obadina, Chair of GHI's Food Safety Training and Education Working Group, offers a vivid reminder of what that work looks like in practice, drawing on his parallel role as Coordinator of the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAA) Technical Unit at the Association of African Universities (AAU).



In a recent post, Prof. Obadina reflected on the progress made through the HAQAA Initiative and the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), which have become a reference point for building trust, transparency, and comparability across African higher education systems. He highlighted the growing use of the HAQAA3 External Agency Review methodology by national quality assurance bodies — a sign, as he put it, of the continent's "growing commitment... to building a harmonised and internationally credible African Higher Education and Research Space."

The parallels with GHI's own mission are striking. Just as ASG-QA gives African universities and quality assurance agencies a shared framework for recognising and building on each other's standards rather than working in isolation, GHI's Food Safety Training and Education Working Group pursues harmonised, globally consistent approaches to food safety competency — so that training, credentials, and educational standards developed in one country or region can be recognised, trusted, and built upon elsewhere, rather than duplicated or dismissed. Prof. Obadina's insight that "quality assurance is no longer merely about compliance — it is about fostering excellence, accountability, institutional improvement, and greater recognition" translates directly into the working group's own approach to food safety education: training that builds genuine capability and institutional trust, not just paperwork compliance.



This cross-sector perspective is exactly the kind of contribution GHI values in its working group leadership. Prof. Obadina brings to food safety training and education the same systems-level thinking he applies to continental higher education harmonisation: an understanding that lasting standards are built through capacity development, peer learning, and sustained institutional commitment – not through top-down mandates alone. His experience coordinating external reviews and facilitating cooperation across dozens of national quality assurance agencies offers a template that food safety training networks worldwide can learn from, particularly as GHI works to extend harmonised food safety education and training standards across regions with widely varying institutional capacity.

As GHI continues to expand its work in food safety training and education globally, Prof. Obadina's dual perspective – as a food safety and HACCP specialist, and as a leader in continental quality assurance harmonisation – exemplifies the interdisciplinary, cross-regional collaboration at the heart of GHI's mission: building the shared frameworks that let good practice travel, be trusted, and be built upon, wherever it originates.

GHI Leadership Recognition: Assoc. Prof. Iuliana Vintilă Appointed to Editorial Board

The Global Harmonization Initiative is delighted to share that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iuliana Vintilă, Chair of GHI's Nutrition Working Group, has been invited to join the Editorial Board of *Advances in Integrative and Complementary Medicine* (Scivolve, USA). The appointment recognises her sustained contributions to nutrition science, alongside her leadership of GHI's Nutrition Working Group, where she has helped drive the group's work toward harmonised, evidence-based approaches to nutrition research and practice across diverse regulatory and scientific contexts.

Editorial board work gives her a close-up view of how nutrition research is reviewed and shared internationally – a natural complement to her role chairing the Nutrition Working Group, where similar questions of evidence and rigor come up regularly. It also brings an integrative and complementary medicine perspective into that conversation, at a time when more researchers are asking how conventional and complementary approaches to nutrition can be assessed on the same solid scientific footing.



Assoc. Prof. Vintilă has also extended an open invitation to colleagues across the GHI network to contribute to the journal, both as authors and as peer reviewers – a further opportunity to strengthen the connections between GHI's global community of scientists and the wider publishing landscape in nutrition and integrative medicine. GHI congratulates Assoc. Prof. Vintilă on this well-deserved appointment and looks forward to the continued impact of her leadership, both within the Nutrition Working Group and in this new editorial role.

UNDERSTANDING FOOD SAFETY LAWS: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



From Science to Policy: A New Reference on Food Safety Agencies

How do food safety agencies protect public health while supporting international food trade? These important questions are explored in the newly published chapter, "Food Safety Agencies," now available through Elsevier's Reference Module in Food Science and set to appear in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Food, Nutrition and Health* (2nd Edition), expected in 2027.

The chapter examines the evolving role of food safety agencies across international, regional, and national governance systems, highlighting the importance of science-based regulation, risk analysis, and international cooperation in ensuring safe food systems and facilitating global trade.

The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) is proud to congratulate Dr. Adina Baicu, Chair of the Food Law and Regulations Working Group, on this achievement. The chapter was co-authored with Dr. Katja Knapp (Pietrzyck), and the collaboration was established through GHI's international network, demonstrating the value of connecting experts from around the world to advance food science and regulatory knowledge.

We congratulate Dr. Baicu and Dr. Knapp on this valuable contribution to the field and look forward to the publication of the complete *Encyclopedia of Food, Nutrition and Health* (2nd Edition) in 2027.

Call for Contributions: Special Issue on "Challenges and Opportunities of Sustainable Food Systems for Global Health"

GHI is pleased to share a Call for Contributions to a new Special Issue in *Sustainability* (MDPI), guest edited by Dr. Diana Bogueva, President of GHI, and Prof. Dr. Dora Marinova. Global food systems face a paradox: they have increased food availability worldwide, yet have also contributed to persistent undernutrition, rising obesity and diet-related disease, environmental degradation, and climate change. This Special Issue explores the transition toward food systems that place human and planetary health at the centre – welcoming contributions on sustainable agriculture, food environments and dietary transitions, policy and governance, equity and access, Indigenous and local food systems, and the health impacts of climate change.

Original research, reviews, policy analyses, case studies, and conceptual papers from public health, nutrition, agriculture, social sciences, environmental science, and economics are all welcome. This is a great opportunity for GHI's global network to contribute directly to the evidence base shaping sustainable food systems policy and practice.

Submit an abstract or full paper here:
https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/23549QBT19

Food Processing at a Turning Point: Why Its Evolution Matters for Global Food Futures

Food processing is no longer simply a technical step in the agrifood chain. It has become a strategic interface, one that connects upstream realities such as agricultural variability, climate impacts, and population dynamics with downstream outcomes including nutritional quality, affordability, safety, and consumer acceptance. This reframing is essential, because the pressures facing today's food systems demand solutions that are both scientifically grounded and globally coordinated.

The article 'Food processing must evolve to solve global challenges', published in *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, how industrialisation once enabled safer, more abundant, and efficient food supplies. Yet modern food systems now operate within tightening planetary boundaries. Climate change disrupts production, resource scarcity challenges stability, and demographic shifts reshape consumer expectations. Meanwhile, many food environments promote products with limited nutritional value, adding to global health burdens. The authors argue that evolving food processing is key to addressing these challenges — helping deliver healthier diets, reduce environmental impacts, and build resilience across the food system.

Their perspective draws on insights from population dynamics, food production and processing, and nutrition and healthy diets to show how processing can proactively support global needs. By treating processing as a strategic mechanism rather than a technical step, the article highlights how innovation—through improved preservation, reformulation, and sustainability-focused technologies—can reduce waste, enhance nutritional quality, and improve affordability. These innovations are essential for feeding a growing population with fewer resources and lower environmental impact.

This publication features strong contributions from several GHI colleagues: Prof. Dr. h.c. Huub Lelieveld (GHI Founder and Honorary President), Dr. Diana Bogueva (GHI President), and Prof. Diána Bánáti, Prof. Anet Režek Jambrak, and Prof. Olga Martín-Belloso, whose research continues to shape global dialogue on food processing. Together with distinguished co-authors from outside GHI, they reflect the breadth and global relevance of this work.

While not a GHI position paper, it aligns closely with GHI's mission to promote science-based, harmonised approaches to food safety and public health — underscoring the organisation's commitment to evidence-based solutions and international cooperation. The message is clear: evolving food processing is essential to building a safer, more nutritious, and sustainable food future for all.

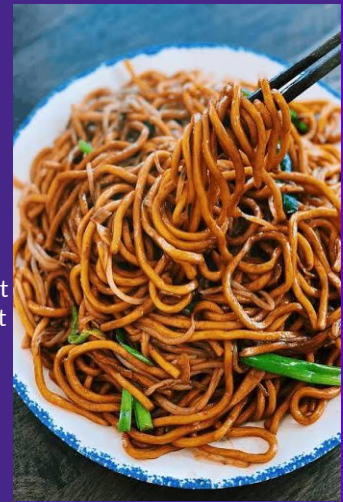
If interested to find more, check the 'Food processing must evolve to solve global challenges' article [here](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10408398.2026.2699813):
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10408398.2026.2699813>



The Man Who Turned Fried Noodles Into a Peace Movement

In the winter of 1945, the streets of Osaka were filled with people who had nothing left to eat. Japan had lost the war, its cities were rubble, and food shortages were killing people who had survived the bombs but couldn't survive the famine that followed. A businessman named Momofuku Ando, who had already lost one company to bankruptcy, walked past the black-market ramen stalls that had sprung up to feed the desperate lines of hungry people, and something in him fixed on a single, oddly specific idea: someone needs to make this food last.

It took him more than a decade to get there. Ando spent a year working alone in a small shed in his backyard, trying every method he could think of to dry noodles without ruining them — nothing worked, until one evening he watched his wife, Masako, making tempura in the kitchen. Watching the scalding oil pull the moisture out of the batter, he had the insight that would define the rest of his life: if hot oil could dehydrate food that fast, it could preserve noodles the same way, locking in a shelf-stable meal that needed nothing but hot water to come back to life.



On August 25, 1958, he unveiled the result: Chicken Ramen, the world's first instant noodles. It wasn't cheap — at roughly six times the price of fresh noodles, it launched as something closer to a luxury item than the food-security solution Ando had imagined, and early customers were skeptical of a noodle that came back to life out of a packet. But the idea outlived the doubts. In 1971, Nissin Foods launched Cup Noodles, putting the whole meal — noodles, seasoning, and eventual hot water — into a single disposable cup, and the product spread from Japan to more than 100 countries. Today, people eat roughly 100 billion servings of instant noodles a year worldwide, according to the World Instant Noodles Association — a figure that would have sounded like fantasy to the man standing in that ramen line in 1945.

Ando never stopped chasing the same idea in new forms. At 91, he set his team to work on "Space Ram," a version of instant noodles engineered to survive in zero gravity, thickened so the broth wouldn't float apart in the astronauts' hands. It flew aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery in 2005 — two years before Ando died at 96, having spent six decades solving, in his own quiet way, the same problem he'd first seen on a street corner in postwar Osaka: how do you get food to the people who need it, wherever and however they happen to be.

He once put his own philosophy into a single sentence, one that reads almost like an early, homemade version of what food security researchers would spend the next seventy years trying to formalise: "Peace will come to the world when there is enough food."

There's a reason a story like Ando's still resonates with organisations like GHI decades later. His invention wasn't really about noodles — it was about access: making sure that food security didn't depend on someone's proximity to a working kitchen, a fresh market, or even a reliable power supply. That is, at its core, the same problem GHI's global network works on today, just across a much wider range of foods, technologies, and regulatory systems: how to make safe, sufficient, harmonised food genuinely reachable, wherever people happen to be standing when they need it.

GHI at the 35th EFSA StaDG-ER meeting – Granada

Emerging chemical risks rarely arrive as a single, obvious event – they build quietly, at the intersection of shifting agricultural practices, environmental exposure, and gaps in existing regulation, often long before any single monitoring system flags them on its own. That is precisely the space EFSA's Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN) and Standing Working Group on Emerging Risks (StaDG-ER) exist to cover, bringing together regulators, scientists, and stakeholders to compare early signals before they become full-blown safety concerns. GHI's participation in this network reflects its own commitment to that same kind of forward-looking, collaborative risk identification.

GHI took part in EFSA's 35th Emerging Risks Exchange Network meeting in Granada on 11-12 June 2026, with Asli Solmaz-Kaiser representing GHI in the EREN–StaDG-ER joint session on 11 June. GHI presented its AI-supported chemical horizon scanning – examples included PFAS in infant formula, cadmium linked to fertilisers and new consumption patterns, and bisphenol via environmental pathways. The point: emerging chemical risks surface where evolving practices, environmental factors and regulatory gaps meet.

What sets this kind of scanning apart is its focus on connections that traditional monitoring often misses. A single data point on cadmium levels, or one report of bisphenol exposure, rarely triggers alarm on its own – but tracked together, and set against changing fertiliser use or packaging practices, these signals start to tell a clearer story. That is the value GHI brings to networks like EREN and StaDG-ER: not just data, but a way of reading it before the risk becomes obvious to everyone else.

The discussion tied into the EU's new early warning and action system (EWAS) under One Substance One Assessment, which EREN, StaDG-ER and stakeholders like GHI are expected to feed into. There was strong interest in GHI's working groups – in particular the Whistleblower Food Safety Incident Report Site, GHI's anonymous global reporting tool. Also flagged at the meeting: Covert Mortality Nodavirus classified as an emerging risk, toxin carry-over in fermentation-derived infant formula ingredients, and rising heavy-metal signals in protein powders and matcha.

The next meeting will take place in October in Parma. Any contributions to the topic can be channeled through Chemical and Food Ethics WG leaders.



Photo: Asli Solmaz-Kaiser with a colleague from Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE)

A Month on a Plate: Fruit, Kebab, and Tofu – July's Unlikely Food Trilogy

July does something quietly remarkable in the world of food observances: within its four weeks, it moves from the orchard to the grill to the soybean field, marking International Fruit Day on the 1st, World Kebab Day on the 10th, and World Tofu Day on the 26th. Taken individually, they look like unrelated calendar curiosities. Taken together, they trace something more interesting — the arc of how humanity has fed itself, from what grows on a tree, to what's cooked over fire, to what's engineered from a single humble bean into one of the most versatile proteins on the planet.

July 1: International Fruit Day

The story starts, fittingly, with the simplest food of all. International Fruit Day began in 2007 in Berlin's Mauerpark — a former Cold War no-man's-land turned public park — when a group of social work students organised a shared meal to bring communities together across old divides. What started as a few hundred people sharing fruit has grown into an observance marked in more than 50 countries, complete with an annually voted "Fruit of the Year" (2026's honouree: the date, chosen from ten shortlisted varieties by public vote at international trade fairs).

The day's popularity isn't just sentimental. Fruit consumption sits at the centre of dietary guidelines worldwide precisely because of what it delivers: fibre, vitamins, antioxidants, and — increasingly relevant to how the day frames itself — a genuinely low-impact food choice, since eating seasonally and locally cuts down on the transport and storage emissions that come with importing produce out of season. It's a reminder that some of the oldest food traditions are still among the most sustainable ones we have.

July 10: World Kebab Day

Nine days later, the calendar turns from raw simplicity to fire and craft. Kebabs — in their dozens of regional forms, from Turkish şiş and döner to Middle Eastern shawarma, South Asian seekh kebabs, and Southeast Asian satay — represent one of the oldest and most widely adapted cooking traditions in the world, built around a method (skewering and grilling over open flame) rather than a fixed recipe. That flexibility is exactly why the dish has travelled so far: kebabs are claimed, adapted, and fiercely defended as a point of national pride across Türkiye, Iran, Lebanon, Greece, India, Pakistan, and Egypt, among many others.

What's less obvious is how far the kebab has moved beyond meat. Paneer, mushroom, and vegetable seekh kebabs are now firmly part of the tradition in many of these same cuisines, and increasingly on menus everywhere else — meaning the kebab, of all things, has quietly become a case study in how a single culinary form can flex to meet very different dietary needs, from the traditional lamb şiş to a fully plant-based skewer, without losing what makes it recognisably itself.

July 26: World Tofu Day

The month closes with the food that, on paper, seems the least glamorous of the three, but arguably carries the most weight in conversations about the future of protein. Tofu's history stretches back over a thousand years in East Asia — by some accounts to around 900 CE in Japan, with roots in China reaching further still — and it remains a genuine dietary staple across China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia, not a novelty food.

What's changed is where else it's showing up. Market analysts broadly agree that global tofu demand is growing at a healthy mid-single-digit-to-high-single-digit annual rate, driven by the same forces reshaping food systems everywhere: rising interest in plant-based and flexitarian diets, growing awareness of the environmental footprint of animal agriculture, and tofu's basic nutritional case — it's one of the few plant foods that delivers all nine essential amino acids, making it a genuinely complete protein, alongside meaningful amounts of iron and calcium. Asia-Pacific still dominates global production and consumption by a wide margin, a reminder that tofu isn't so much a "new" food trend as an old one finally getting global recognition.

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The Thread Running Through

Look at these three days side by side, and a pattern emerges that says something honest about where food systems are headed. Fruit represents food in its most unprocessed form — nutrition with almost no intervention required. The kebab represents food as craft and adaptation — a tradition flexible enough to absorb entirely new dietary values (vegetarian, halal, health-conscious) without abandoning its cultural identity. And tofu represents food as engineered protein transformation — an ancient technology now being asked to do very modern work, feeding a growing global population within tighter environmental limits.

None of these foods "compete" with each other, and that's rather the point. A food system resilient enough for the century ahead will need all three registers at once: the unprocessed, the adapted, and the engineered. July, as it turns out, gives us a small, tasty reminder of exactly that — one day at a time.

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