

Gluten Management Initiative in Jordan

Follow-up Meeting

September 4, 2025– Location: Zoom online

3:00 PM/ AMMAN – JORDAN

Participants

Celiac Care Providers Society	Abida Al- Qaisi
GFORSS	Amine Kassouf Ruba Goussous Mustafa Sultan

Introduction

At the opening of the meeting, Dr. Amine Kassouf, Scientific Director of GFORSS and President of the Arab Section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL, outlined the objectives of the initiative. He highlighted the collaboration between GFORSS and the Celiac Association to evaluate whether the Codex threshold of 20 mg/kg (20 ppm) for gluten in foods provides sufficient protection for individuals living with celiac disease in Jordan. He explained that a risk assessment study will be undertaken, supported by a national monitoring program, to generate data on actual dietary exposure to gluten through food as consumed. Dr. Amine further emphasized ongoing efforts to standardize analytical methods for gluten testing and to work with the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO) on the development of a harmonized Arab standard. He noted that this combined approach will provide the scientific and regulatory foundation to enhance consumer protection and strengthen confidence in gluten-free foods across the region.

Key Discussion Points

The meeting focused on advancing the needed action for the Gluten Management initiative in Jordan with the proposed steps to move forward with the initiative.

1. Full Dietary Profiling

- The meeting noted the importance of full dietary profiling, including raw ingredients, multi-ingredient meals, and ready-to-eat products, and that Ms. Abida is preparing a comprehensive list which will be updated and shared in due course.

2. Consumptions Survey (24 Hour Recall)

- Generating 24 hours recall survey based on the international guidance but specifically tailored for the Celiac population in Jordan in collaboration with a Nutritional Expert (to be named).

3. Sampling Plans

- The development of a nationally representative sampling plan is critical to obtaining reliable and scientifically valid outcomes. Such a plan should encompass the entire supply chain, including production establishments, storage facilities, and retail outlets, to capture potential variations across different stages. Importantly, the sampling strategy should reflect food as consumed, rather than individual raw ingredients, in line with the principles applied in Total Diet Studies (TDS) as recommended by WHO/FAO. Within this framework, priority should be given to foods and composite food groups that contribute most significantly to the daily diet and are recognized as potential sources of gluten exposure, thereby ensuring that risk assessments are both representative and relevant to actual consumer intake patterns.

4. Experts Engagements

- The engagement of qualified experts is considered essential to strengthen the scientific basis of this work. In particular, the involvement of a nutritional expert is recommended to support the appropriate application and interpretation of food consumption data, ensuring that exposure assessments are representative of actual dietary patterns and relevant to the coeliac population. In this context, Ms. Abida noted that she will soon be meeting with the Association of European Coeliac Societies and suggested that their assistance be sought in nominating and providing such an expert, thereby enabling the initiative to benefit from European experience with studies and surveys on the coeliac population and fostering collaboration with recognized stakeholders.

5. GFORSS Support

The GFORSS team reiterated its full readiness to provide technical guidance and support throughout the different phases of this initiative. This includes assisting in the planning and

implementation of the consumption survey, ensuring the proper assessment and interpretation of consumption data, and contributing to the design and execution of a nationally representative sampling plan. In addition, GFORSS expressed its willingness to extend any further technical assistance required to strengthen the scientific robustness of the work and to ensure that the outcomes effectively support evidence-based decision-making and consumer protection.

6. AOAC Arab Section Updates

Participants were updated on ongoing activities of the AOAC Arab Section, including the Gluten Management Initiative. In this context, Ms. Abida recommended that a Jordanian expert from the national laboratories be included in the committee working on gluten within the Arab AOAC, to ensure that Jordan's technical expertise and perspectives are fully represented in the regional work.

Next Steps (Joint Actions)

- Schedule a follow-up meeting in the coming weeks with participation from the Jordan Armed Forces Laboratories to review and endorse the proposed plan.
- Ms. Abida to finalize and share the full dietary profiling list.
- Seek support from the Association of European Coeliac Societies in nominating a nutritional expert to guide the consumption survey and exposure assessment.
- GFORSS to provide technical input for the 24-hour recall survey, the sampling plan, and the monitoring program.
- Maintain coordination through ongoing communication channels (e.g., WhatsApp).