SESSIONS PROGRAM

5th Global Food Regulatory Science Symposium

Organized as part of the

20th Dubai International Food Safety Conference

Proposed Thematic Sessions and Regional Capacity-Building Initiatives

16–17 November 2026

3 THEMATIC SESSIONS

Dubai World Trade Centre
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

PROPOSED THEMATIC SESSIONS

Program at a glance

Three sessions across two days, framing regional capacity-building in food risk assessment, risk communication and food innovation.

01

16 NOVEMBER · 14:00 – 17:00 · PAGES 3–4

From Science to Decisions

Advancing Food Risk Assessment to Corroborate Food Regulatory Decisions

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A common list of assessment priorities, data gaps and potential collaborative scientific projects.

02

17 NOVEMBER · 09:00 – 12:30 · PAGES 5–6

When Food Safety Goes Viral

Risk Communication, Managing Media Scares and Building Public Trust

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Shared good practices and options for a regional information-sharing and rapid-response network.

03

17 NOVEMBER · 14:00 – 17:30 · PAGES 7–8

Unlocking Food Innovation in the GCC and Arab Region

Health Claims, Regulation and Market Access

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Practical recommendations for innovation-enabling regulatory reform and a possible regional technical dialogue.

SESSION 1 16 NOVEMBER 14:00 – 17:00

From Science to Decisions

Advancing Food Risk Assessment to Corroborate Food Regulatory Decisions

Arab food regulatory authorities are strengthening risk assessment capacities to underpin predictable, science-based decisions. This session will review international updates, national accomplishments and future priorities, with emphasis on the competencies, methodologies and data needed to assess emerging issues.

Proposed discussion themes

1 **Food additives** — Scientific evidence, dietary exposure and regulatory decision-making, with a focus on:
Food colours: Review of safety evidence, exposure assessment and risk management approaches across jurisdictions.
Aspartame: Lessons from EFSA assessments and JECFA/IARC evaluations, including the distinction between hazard identification and risk assessment, and the communication of scientific findings and regulatory decisions.

2 **Managing Risks from Food Contaminants** — International updates, regional priorities and data needs to support exposure assessment and risk management.

3 **National progress** — Country updates on institutional arrangements, risk assessment teams and practical regulatory applications.

4 **Regional cooperation** — Opportunities for shared methodologies, datasets, technical networks and collaborative assessments.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A common list of assessment priorities, data gaps and potential collaborative scientific projects.

SESSION 1 · 16 NOVEMBER

Detailed program

14:00 – 14:20	**Development of Risk Assessment Capacity in Low- and Medium-Income country (LMIC) – a Proposed Approach** ***Dr. Moez Sanaa**, International Food Risk Analysis Consortium (IFoRAC)*
14:20 – 14:40	**Sweeteners: From Hazard Identification to Risk Assessment and Regulatory Communication** ***Mr. Greg Paoli**, CEO Risk Science International, Ottawa, ON. Canada - Board Member, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
14:40 – 15:00	**WHO's Integrated Food Profiling Model: Regulatory Implications and Opportunities for Input** ***Prof. Samuel Godefroy**, Full Professor of Food Risk Analysis at Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President & COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
15:00 – 15:20	**Cereulide in Infant Formula: Lessons from a Multi-Country Food Safety Incident for Risk Assessment and Regulatory Action** ***Dr. Joseph Touma**, Deputy Manager of Food Microbiology Laboratory at the Lebanese Agronomic Research Institute (LARI), Lebanon; Science Team Member, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
15:20 – 15:40	**From National Data to Codex Action: Responding to Data Calls and Priorities Following CCCF19 – Focus on aflatoxins in cereals and ochratoxin A in dried fruits.** ***Dr. Amine Kassouf**, Scientific Director, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
15:40 – 16:00	**Health Break**
16:00 – 17:00	ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION **Advancing Food Risk Assessment in the Arab Region — National Progress and Regional Cooperation** • **National progress:** Developments in institutional arrangements, scientific advisory mechanisms and risk assessment teams, with examples of how assessments have informed regulatory decisions. • **Discussing Emerging Issues in food safety risk assessment and management:** additives review and approval e.g., food colors, sweeteners, innovative ingredients. • **Shared challenges and needs:** Gaps in expertise, methodologies, food consumption and occurrence data, and mechanisms for translating scientific advice into regulatory action. • **Regional cooperation:** Opportunities to share methodologies and datasets, connect technical experts and undertake collaborative assessments of common interest. **Moderator:** *Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Full Professor of Food Risk Analysis at Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President & COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*

SESSION 2 17 NOVEMBER 09:00 – 12:30

When Food Safety Goes Viral

Risk Communication, Managing Media Scares and Building Public Trust

Social media can rapidly amplify genuine concerns, unverified claims and deliberate hoaxes. Regulators must verify signals, assess risks and communicate proportionately without unnecessarily magnifying misinformation. The session draws on regional work on incident management and structured risk communication.

Proposed discussion themes

1. **Emerging challenges** — Examples of false contamination alerts, ingredient scares and misleading scientific claims.
2. **Regulatory experience** — How national authorities monitor signals, verify information, mobilize scientific advice and coordinate public responses.
3. **Proactive communication** — Prepared technical briefs, transparent messages, trusted spokespersons and engagement with consumers.
4. **Regional coordination** — A possible mechanism to exchange verified evidence, common response templates and lessons learned across authorities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Shared good practices and options for a regional information-sharing and rapid-response network.

SESSION 2 · 17 NOVEMBER

Detailed program

09:00 – 09:30	**Risk Communication in the Age of Social Media: The Art of Addressing Misinformation** ***SAFIRA*** *— GFoRSS Science Ambassador for Food Information, Risk and Awareness*
09:30 – 10:00	**Social Media as a Powerful Tool for Nutrition Communication: Truth or Illusion?** ***Dr. Elie Bouyazbeck****, Food Safety Expert, Ministry of Economy and Trade, member of the Board, Food Safety Lebanese Commission (FSLC), Lebanon*
10:00 – 10:30	**Evidence-Based Food Labelling: Striking the Balance Between Consumer Protection and Responsible Risk Communication** ***Eng. Ikram Riahi****, Manager Food Policy and Label review, CPMA (Canadian produce marketing association), Canada; Science Team Member, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
10:30 – 11:00	**Health Break**
11:00 – 11:30	**Engaging Consumers in Food Regulatory Decisions: Oman's Initiative on Alternatives to Plastic Bottles for Mineral Water** ***Dr. Intisar Al-Gharibi****, Director General, Food Safety and Quality Center, Oman – Chairperson, FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE)*
11:30 – 12:30	PANEL DISCUSSION **Responding Together: Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Food Safety Misinformation** • Exchanging verified scientific evidence and alerts. • Developing adaptable technical briefs and response templates. • Connecting scientific and communication focal points. • Sharing lessons from previous incidents. **Moderator:** ***Prof. Samuel Godefroy****, Full Professor of Food Risk Analysis at Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President & COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*

SESSION 3 17 NOVEMBER 14:00 – 17:30

Unlocking Food Innovation in the GCC and Arab Region

Health Claims, Regulation and Market Access

Innovative ingredients, functional foods, alternative proteins and traditional food resources offer opportunities for healthier diets and economic growth. Yet fragmented rules and unclear authorization pathways can impede safe innovations reaching markets.

Proposed discussion themes

1. **Innovation opportunities** — Emerging ingredients, new production technologies and valorization of traditional food resources.
2. **Health claims** — Scientific substantiation, evidence standards and transparent review and authorization pathways.
3. **Market access barriers** — Differences in national requirements, unclear procedures and limited reliance on credible international assessments.
4. **Modernizing frameworks** — Proportionate pre-market oversight, early regulator–innovator dialogue, regulatory reliance and regional convergence.
5. **Measuring readiness** — Potential application of the GFoRSS Food Innovation Support Index to identify regulatory reform priorities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Practical recommendations for innovation-enabling regulatory reform and a possible regional technical dialogue.

SESSION 3 · 17 NOVEMBER

Detailed program

14:00 – 14:20	**Advancing Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems: The Asia Food Innovation-Ready Regulatory Systems (AFIRS) Initiative** ***Dr. Mustafa Sultan**, Scientific Director for the Near-East, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
14:20 – 14:40	**Supporting Concerted Actions for Food Regulatory Systems Development in Africa – Serving the Development of Food and Agri-food Systems in Africa** ***Dr. Mamodou Bah**, Director General, Food Safety and Quality Authority of the Gambia, Chairperson, FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA)*
14:40 – 15:00	**Addressing Food Innovation in Africa – Transforming Food Regulatory Systems to Support Value Addition** ***Mr. Hakim B. Mufumbiro**, Head, Food and Agriculture Standards Division, Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), Uganda*
15:00 – 15:20	**Considerations for the Development of a Risk-Based, Innovation Enabling Regulatory Framework for Novel Foods and Novel Ingredients in Qatar** ***Dr. Muna Al Olan**, Acting Head, Policies, Standards and Risk Management Section, Food Safety Department, Ministry of Public Health, State of Qatar*
15:20 – 16:00	**Health Break**
16:00 – 16:30	**Building an Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory System: Key Pillars and Enabling Conditions** ***Dr. Ruba Goussous**, Operations Director, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*
16:30 – 17:30	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION **Building an Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory System** How can food regulatory systems enable innovation while protecting public health and maintaining consumer trust? DISCUSSION POINTS • Adapting regulatory pathways to novel foods, ingredients and technologies. • Defining evidence requirements for assessing safety and substantiating claims. • Strengthening early dialogue between regulators, industry and researchers. • Advancing regulatory cooperation and building the expertise needed to assess innovation. **Moderator:** ***Prof. Samuel Godefroy**, Full Professor of Food Risk Analysis at Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President & COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*

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