

Editorial

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Quality Assurance and Safety of Crops & Foods : MoniQA

On behalf of MoniQA (*Monitoring and Quality Assurance in the total food supply chain*) I am delighted to invite you to enjoy the first issue of *Quality Assurance and Safety of Crops & Foods*, the official journal of ICC – International Association for Cereal Science and Technology, an undertaking which is indeed an international collaboration between the global membership of ICC and the MoniQA consortium, an EU-funded Network of Excellence (NoE) initially comprising over 155 scientists from 20 countries, which has grown to over 400 experts from more than 100 institutions from over 35 countries from five continents in the first 18 months of its lifetime. The two networks – ICC and MoniQA – cover a wide range of competences in the area of food quality and safety analysis across a wide spectrum of foods and feedstuffs. The relatively young MoniQA network of experts – MoniQA started in 2007 – offers complementary expertise to ICC's tradition and its highly valued ICC Standard Methods for the cereal and grain industries and thus extends the association's activities to general food safety and quality issues. This comprehensive coverage of food safety and quality analysis as well as risk management guarantees the high quality of this newly established journal.

MoniQA is working towards the harmonization of monitoring and control strategies for food quality and safety assessment, where traditional analytical methods meet new and rapid technologies. MoniQA focuses on validation of and setting performance criteria/requirements for methods used to analyse foods and food products for safety and quality with the main focus being on rapid methods and their applicability and reliability in routine testing. The work involves validation studies, design and development of reference materials/testing materials, and validation guidelines. MoniQA will play an important role in integrat-

ing European and worldwide food quality and safety research by creating a virtual laboratory for joint research, training, dissemination and mobility programmes.

In the long-term the MoniQA consortium hopes that the project will form the basis of a sustainable global network of food safety and quality experts. Eight food quality and safety issues of top priority were identified by the international MoniQA expert panel: (1) mycotoxins and phycotoxins, (2) food allergens, (3) chemical contaminants (i.e. pesticide residues, environmental contaminants), (4) microbiological contaminants, (5) food authenticity and traceability, and (6) food additives, as well as horizontal issues such as (7) socioeconomic impact and (8) method validation for qualitative methods. It is those issues that are featured in this first issue of this journal describing the current needs and difficulties, and the planned initiatives to help resolve pending issues, such as lacking reference methods and referenced materials, impractical sampling plans, not comparable analytical results and the overall reliability of rapid analysis. More recently these topics were complemented with emerging issues, such as melamine, dioxins, and nano-particles in foods, which will be featured in one of the next issues.

As co-editor in chief I am happy to work with Stan Cauvain, an experienced cereal technologist and consultant to the cereal and food industries.

I would like to invite you to enjoy this first issue featuring invited papers from ICC and MoniQA and I would like to extend the invitation to you to contribute to one of the future issues.

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