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The global harmonization initiative

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The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) is an international non-profit network of scientific organizations and individual scientists working together to promote harmonization of global food safety regulations and legislation. The last 40 years have seen dramatic changes in the extent and ways that food is traded, both locally and globally, due to the development of novel food preservation technologies as well as novel ways of transportation, which have eliminated many practical obstacles to food trade. However, along with increased food trade, elimination of food-associated hazards has become an increasingly important aspect of the operation of the food chain, from farm to fork. Many countries in the world have implemented stringent food safety legislation and regulations, while other countries are in the process of implementation. However, very often these regulations differ between nations, creating obstacles in food trade and thus in the global food supply. Large amounts of food is being destroyed, or not produced in the first place, due to food regulations that are set to be as stringent as possible rather than to provide an appropriate protection against an identified hazard. Therefore, there was a need for the globalization of food safety regulations, in particular regarding links with the scientific basis for the regulations and justifications for prescribed alleviating actions. The presentation will present some examples of topics where global harmonization will improve food security and reduce food waste at different levels, and how GHI aims to support and enhance this process.

Biography

Kirsten Brandt is a Senior Lecturer of Food Science and Nutrition in the Food Quality and Health Research Group of the Human Nutrition Research Centre, Newcastle University. Her research focuses on food quality and impact on human health, including assessing health-promoting properties of plant constituents previously considered harmful for human health, such as secondary metabolites and nitrate, as well as understanding of the effect of production factors on plant product composition.

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